

FEB 25 1997

THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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VOL. 121

No. 3

Cubans welcome '10 feet tall' Baptists

By Mary E. Speidel
SBC Foreign Mission Board

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (BP) — Six Florida volunteers working in Cuba helped pave the way for a goodwill visit of their pastor and others in an entourage of Southern Baptists led by Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin.

Bill Billingsley, pastor of Sheridan Hills Church, Hollywood, Fla., felt he was treated like a hero because he was pastor of the church that had sent the volunteer team. "Those men are 10 feet tall in Cuba," he said. The team flew home the afternoon Billingsley and the others arrived.

Officials of the Western Baptist Convention of Cuba invited the Baptist groups to visit their island nation. They entered Cuba on religious visas and with permission from the U.S. government.

"It's been wonderful for awakening, for the refreshing of the (church's) world consciousness," said Billingsley, speaking of the trip to Cuba.

"There's a compassion that reaches across the Florida straits ... a long

hand that reaches out from the Christians of south Florida," he said.

The volunteers worked alongside Cuban Baptists for a week in a Havana suburb, helping to enlarge the Baptist Home for the Elderly.

"The lives of those touched by this trip will never be the same," declared Randy Killian, a Dade County paramedic who was part of the team.

In addition to their construction work,



'HERO'S' WELCOME — At the Baptist home for the Elderly in Havana, Cuba, residents greet Bill Billingsley (left), pastor of Sheridan Hills Church in Hollywood, Fla. Billingsley traveled to Cuba in January with several leaders of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and five other pastors. Their visit — to observe work of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention — coincided with a trip made by six construction volunteers from Billingsley's church. The volunteers worked alongside Cuban Baptists, helping to enlarge the Baptist home. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

the volunteers played key roles in worship services in the Villa Rosa and Gethsemane Baptist churches in Havana.

"I can't begin to tell you how much I was impacted," said volunteer Allen Rice, who said his call to go to seminary was confirmed by his experiences in Cuba.

Rice was especially impressed by one Cuban pastor — a medical doctor attending the Baptist seminary in Havana.

"We came to bring the love of God but we received more from the Cubans," said volunteer Cal Wallace.

"We went as Americans and they as

Cubans, but we found we were brothers in Christ. Their focus is on God. They loved us as much as we loved them; we were one in Christ," he said.

Added volunteer Clell Coleman, associate pastor at Sheridan Hills: "When I preached and looked out across this 100-plus people and saw the children and the middle-aged and the old, I was impressed that the work of God in the hearts of people goes on across the face of the earth, no matter the circumstance.

"God is there, working in the hearts of people," he said.



SONGS OF PRAISE — Cuban Baptist young people praise God through music at Calvary Church in Havana. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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VBS free T-shirt offer clarified

As a perk for congregations placing early orders for their 1997 Vacation Bible School (VBS) materials, the Baptist Sunday School Board (BSSB) offered 10 free T-shirts to the first 1,000 churches placing an order of \$200 or more by Feb. 28. However, an advertisement placed in the Feb.-March 1997 issue of "SBC Life" failed to mention that the offer was limited to the first 1,000 churches, leaving the BSSB vulnerable to a stampede of churches clamoring for T-shirts.

"The incentive of the free VBS T-shirts is a nice benefit to churches who place their VBS order early, and we are glad to provide this perk," said Mark King, director of marketing and sales for the BSSB's retail group. "We apologize for any inconvenience this omission (from the advertisement) may have caused."

"The Wild and Wonderful Good News Stampede!" is the theme for the 1997 VBS materials. The current T-shirt offer is good on VBS orders placed in any of the 63 Baptist Book Stores or Lifeway Christian Stores, as well as through the board's toll-free order lines.

Looking back

10 years ago

The Baptist Children's Village adds a residential ministry for adolescent girls who become pregnant out of wedlock, in cooperation with the Mississippi Children's Home Society of Jackson, a licensed child-placement and adoption agency.

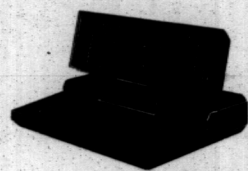
20 years ago

In the mid-'30's Josie S. McEachern of Sunflower Church suggests to editor A. L. Goodrich of "The Baptist Record," that the church "put the paper on the budget, send it to every family, and pay by the month." Other churches soon follow Sunflower's lead.

50 years ago

Murphy Creek Church, Louisville, commemorates the fifteenth anniversary of pastor F. H. Miller. The church has grown from part-time to full-time services, completed a baptistry with butane gas installed. Membership and Sunday School have increased greatly.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

Is the quest for spirituality really dead?

For the whole of humankind's occupation of Earth, we have yearned to understand the spiritual nature that is an unmistakable part of our existence.

Who are we? From whence have we come? Why were we created? For what purpose are we here? What is our future beyond this world?

In virtually every ancient civilization yet uncovered, there is ample evidence to indicate people struggled with such questions in an attempt to understand their spirituality in a way that made sense of the daily events of their lives.

Victories were celebrated and tragedies mourned, but all were ascribed to some higher power.

Christians are fortunate above all people that God and his relationship to humankind have been perfectly revealed in his Son Jesus Christ, in terms so simple that a child can understand and believe.

Yet there are those among us, apparently educated beyond their intelligence, who boast that there is no longer a need for spirituality, since science can provide all the answers previously attributed to God.

Who are we? A product of our DNA. From whence have we come? A primordial sulfur pit that was struck by lightning. Why were we created? It was a random act of evolution.

For what purpose are we here? None, other

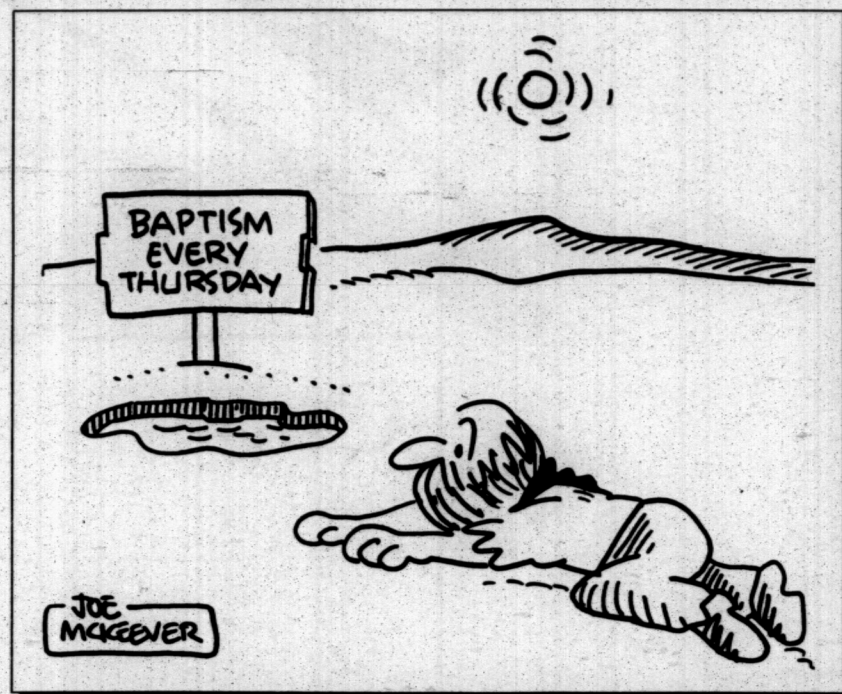
than to attain as much worldly pleasure as possible. *What is our future beyond this world?* Since we are an evolutionary accident that crawled out of a sulfur pit, we have no future beyond this world.

That's it. End of story. Stop looking for spiritual meaning in life, because there is none.

If you believe that, you should stand outside a theater presently showing the movie "Star Wars."

Observe the long line of people waiting hours in freezing weather for the chance to see a 20-year-old movie with strong spiritual (not necessarily Christian) themes, clearly-defined good and evil, a cause for which people are willing to sacrifice, and an ending where right prevails.

Such events give the lie to our attempt to fool ourselves into thinking the quest for spiritual meaning is dead. There is spiritual meaning to our lives, and we cannot deny it.



For those of us who have been commanded by our Savior to evangelize a lost world, our task is made easier by the fact that God built into humankind this deep need for spiritual understanding.

In light of the uncountable numbers of people who seek spiritual understanding in the things of this world like "Star Wars," we've got our work cut out for us.

Let's get to it.

The Bible uses one word to describe the people of God. That word is "Laos"—the people of God, not clergy, not laity, but God's own people. All of them! God's people are waking up to his call to action, and doing it well.

In 1996, 1,144 volunteers from Mississippi went to Colorado, Honduras, and Venezuela through Partnership Missions.

Over 6,000 Mississippians went outside the state to be involved in service at home and overseas.

There are two areas of Bold Mission Thrust that have prospered. One is the prayer ministry and the other is volunteerism.

The year 2000 goal for volunteers in missions overseas was surpassed in 1994, well ahead of schedule.

Both of these efforts are funded by the commitment and devotion of the people of God.

There are multiplied examples in Scripture that magnify the role of the people of God.

In Exodus chapters 34-40, we find the record of the building and erection of the tabernacle.

God gives direction for the participation of the people in carrying out this demanding task. It came into being because of the loving response of those who were willing to bring their material possessions and give their labor.

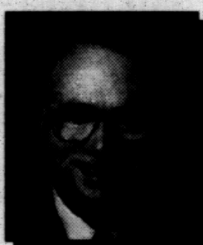
These are typical of what volunteers do today. They give of their possessions and their skills to glorify our Heavenly Father.

What is expected of volunteers? First, a vibrant relationship to Christ as Savior, followed by faithful participation in a local church.



Volunteers in Missions Day February 23, 1997

GUEST OPINION:



Volunteers... Who needs them?

By Bill Hardy, director
MBCB Partnership Missions Office

Next comes a willing spirit — willing to be adaptable and useable as God leads.

It seems that senior adults would have the most time available, but 31% of volunteers in 1996 were in the 40-54 age bracket.

Ephesians 4:11-16 outlines God's plan for equipping volunteers for ministry.

The church leaders are to be the equippers for ministry in the local church and to spread the gospel abroad.

When his plan is placed in motion, there are enough leaders with enough skills to accomplish God's purpose.

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has moved in the direction of greater utilization of volunteers.

Even with the largest missionary contingent ever gathered to

serve globally, population growth exceeds converts each year.

By utilizing volunteers empowered with the Holy Spirit and joining efforts with evangelical missionaries, a greater impact can be made.

Partnership Missions exists for the purpose of channeling the services of volunteers to the places our partners request.

Those responding, fortified by prayer and empowered by God's Holy Spirit, are making a difference.

There are increasing needs for others to respond. To find out what you can do, contact the Partnership Missions Office at the address listed in the box at right.

Who needs volunteers? A lost world without Jesus needs committed volunteers now!



MISSISSIPPI/VENEZUELA PARTNERSHIP

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Malacatia
PM71997208
Demolish unsafe church building and erect new structure. Help needed as soon as possible. 12 member team.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Radio
PM71997209
Annual Mission Meeting of Venezuela Baptist Mission. Team of 14 people needed to conduct Vacation Bible School for missionary kids on June 15-29.

FORLAMAR

PM71997207
Build walls and roof of worship building. Help needed as soon as possible. 10 member team.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

Various locations
PM71997202
Associational training - Five teams of three people each are needed during April/May/June 1997.

For information, contact the MBCB Partnership Missions Office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
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Baptist summer staffs now being recruited

CAMPUS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MONDAY, FEB. 24
Holmes Comm. College BSU
11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Miss. Delta Comm. College
BSU Center
3-5 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEB. 25
NW Miss. Comm. College BSU
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Blue Mountain College
BSU Center
2-3:30 p.m.

University of Miss. BSU Center
5-7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26
Delta State Univ. BSU Center
11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEB. 27
NE Miss. Comm. College BSU
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Miss. State University
BSU Center
3-7:00 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 3
E. Central Comm. College BSU
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Hinds Comm. College BSU
3-5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 4
Co-Lin Comm. College BSU
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Mississippi College
Rogers Student Center
2-7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5
Jones County Jr. College BSU
11 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Univ. of Southern Miss. BSU
2:30-5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6
William Carey College
Lawrence Hall
10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

For more information, contact a
local Baptist Student Union director;
Frank Simmons at (601) 452-7261; or
Dan West at (601) 289-9730.

Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian and Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko, both Mississippi Baptist campuses, are accepting applications for employment for 1997 summer staff.

Frank Simmons, Gulfshore manager, and Dan West, Central Hills manager, will be on a number of college campuses between Feb. 24-March 6 to interview prospective employees.

Gulfshore has a summer schedule running from mid-May to early August.

The summer schedule for staff at Central Hills runs from May 25 to Aug. 8.

Gulfshore activities for 1997 include:

- ◆ four single adult conferences.
- ◆ six youth conferences.
- ◆ three Centrifuge sessions.
- ◆ young musicians conference.
- ◆ family enrichment conference.
- ◆ music leadership conference.
- ◆ HeartSong '98.

Available positions at Gulfshore include food services, lifeguards, housekeeping, registration and office, first aid, and grounds and maintenance.

Central Hills activities for 1997 include:

- ◆ Lad/Crusader Day.
- ◆ two Lad/Dad weekends.
- ◆ six Royal Ambassador/Challenger camps.

Central Hills positions include counselors, activity instructors, and operations workers.

Activity leaders are needed for horseback riding, riflery, archery, the ropes course, handicrafts, and camp craft skills.

Lifeguards are needed for the swimming pool and at the lake for canoeing.

For more information about an interview, contact:

- a local Baptist Student Union director.
- Frank Simmons at (601) 452-7261.
- Dan West at (601) 289-9730.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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BSSB trustees endorse name change

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Executives and trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board (BSSB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agree.

The name of the 106-year-old agency needs to be changed to better reflect its vision and the diversity of its ministries.

The question now is: "To what?"

That's exactly what a 19-member employee naming committee will continue to explore in the coming months.

BSSB trustees affirmed Feb. 11 a recommendation from the board's executive management group that the name should be changed.

Trustees had authorized exploration of a possible name change in September 1996.

The employee committee then was formed and a consulting firm also was employed to assist with the process.

As part of the exploration process, Southern Baptists were invited to submit names. More than 200 names were suggested.

Interviews were conducted in October and November 1996 with a wide range of church and denominational leaders.

In meetings in December and January, the committee narrowed their choices to two short lists of about 20 names.

Also in January, focus groups were conducted in three cities along with telephone interviews.

Preliminary legal research was conducted of name possibilities.

With the decision that a new

name is needed, the special committee will continue to explore possible names.

A recommendation will be presented to BSSB trustees at their next scheduled meeting, Sept. 15-17, in Glorieta, N.M.

If approved by trustees, the new name would then be presented in the form of a charter amendment to the SBC Executive Committee in February 1998 and then to messengers of the SBC annual meeting for consideration in June 1998.

"In no way will we divorce ourselves from the Southern Baptist Convention," said BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. said.

"Whatever we become will include the words, 'of the Southern Baptist Convention,'" he pointed out.

"My generation doesn't need a new name, but my grandchildren do," Draper said.

"More important, we need the mind of Christ in this," he added.

Although he agrees wholeheartedly with the need for a name change, Draper assured trustees the agency has no plans to abandon its strong emphasis on Sunday School and Bible study.

Sunday School, he said, will continue to be "at the heart" of everything the board does.

BSSB trustee Lynda Barfield, a teacher from Hattiesburg, said: "I think it's possible the average Southern Baptist has no idea what all the Sunday School Board does."

"I do think a new name that

reflects what we do will enable clearer communication.

"At the same time, there is a historic, tenderhearted connection with the term 'Sunday School Board.' It's hard to let go of that."

"The timing of this seems right. The names of other agencies are changing. Draper will be here several more years.

These factors make me think

it (a name change) is God's will."

Trustee chairman Nick Garland, pastor of First Church in Broken Arrow, Okla., said the names of other SBC denominational entities are more descriptive of their ministries.

"The time has come for the Sunday School Board to consider a name to describe the largest and most diverse of our entities," he said.

African-American retreat at Garaywa



Baptist Student Union leaders and campus volunteers gather for a talking session at the BSU African-American Retreat at Camp Garaywa. Participants included (front row, from the left): Jessie Dawson, Coordinator, Black Student Work; Amanda Hubbard, volunteer, Hinds Community College (HCC) -Utica campus; Grace Prowell, volunteer, Alcorn State University (ASU); Masheeta Lindsey-Hill, volunteer, Rust College (RC); Tom McLaughlin, Director Mississippi Delta CC; Helen Hampton, volunteer, RC; Benny Wade, volunteer ASU; Gwen Rugh, volunteer, Pearl River CC (PRCC); Dorthy Garner, volunteer, PRCC; (back row, from the left): Jerry Merriman, State Student Work Director; Weaver McCracken, State Student Work Associate; Bobby Cooper, volunteer, HCC-Utica campus; Ed Ablel, Director, Southwest Mississippi CC; Michael Kelly, Director, Holmes CC; Ken Watkins, Director, Mississippi State University; Wayne Vandiver, Director, Northeast Mississippi CC.

Anglers take bait at family fishing seminar

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Jim Phillips won a drawing last year to be one of 100 amateur fishermen at the Bass Masters Top 100 fishing tournament on Neely Henry Lake near Gadston, Ala.

The North Greenwood Church pastor won first place, bringing home a \$20,000 Ranger boat complete with motor and trailer.

Phillips brought home more than a first-place prize package, however. He also brought home an idea for an evangelistic event.

Phillips invited several Christian professional fishermen to his church for a family fishing seminar, added a fish fry, and then asked pro fisherman and evangelist Terry Chupp to preach an evangelistic message.

Chupp serves as a chaplain on the B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers

Sportsman Society) tour, and he also heads Team Jesus, an evangelistic association that sponsors a bass tournament in June of each year.

Fishing was always an important part of Chupp's life. Between careers in banking, sales, and construction, he would go fishing.

He even spent a period of time co-starring on a fishing television program.

His life started in a different direction on July 7, 1985.

"That Sunday the preacher asked one question," Chupp recalled, "Do you know, are you 100 percent sure, you would go to heaven if you die?"

"The Holy Spirit showed me that night that I looked like a stranger to him."

After years of being a Baptist layman and deacon, Chupp was born again.

"The Lord paid my entry fees into the greatest tournament in heaven," Chupp said.

In October 1987, after getting out of the construction business and back into pro fishing, his life took another new turn.

"I saw Jimmy Houston (a fishing pro) and told him I got saved. Jimmy asked me to share with a group that night.

"I sang 'People Need the Lord,' and the Lord called me to be an evangelist," Chupp said.

"I didn't have an education, but I figure I've got as much as Peter had," Chupp said.

"In nine-and-a-half years, we have seen over 3000 people pray to receive Christ. We've seen over 60 saved since January," he added.

There are no BASS events on Sundays, Phillips said.

During the week of an event,



CHECKING OUT THE RIG — Children climb on board a professional bass boat at the family fishing seminar held at North Greenwood Church. With the children are (front, from left) Roger Stegall, professional bass fisherman from Tupelo; Jim Phillips, amateur bass fisherman and pastor of North Greenwood Church; Jeff Magee, professional fisherman from Jackson; Terry Chupp, professional fisherman and evangelist from Lilburn, Ga. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Chupp leads a Bible study for fishing pros and amateurs.

He organizes prayer groups and support groups for the fishermen and their wives. He also does personal evangelism.

In most fishing tournaments, professional fisherman are either paired together or with an amateur. "I get people in a boat and I ask them if they

know Jesus," Chupp said.

Phillips reported there were many lost men and sons at the fishing seminar.

By the time the invitation was given Sunday evening, seven people came forward making professions of faith, with another dozen or so rededications or seekers, and one other addition by letter.

Colo. volunteers needed

A team of Mississippi volunteers is being assembled under the Mississippi/Colorado Partnership and Prentiss Association in north Mississippi to construct a new church building for the Korean Baptist Church of Colorado Springs, Colo.

John Jacobs, director of volunteer missions for Prentiss Association in Booneville, said several people have already volunteered and more are needed for the building project/mission trip, which is tentatively scheduled for June 6-15.

Anyone interested in making the trip must sign up by April 7 to

take advantage of special round-trip airline fares, Jacobs added.

For more information or to volunteer for the project, Jacobs can be contacted at P.O. Box 42, Booneville, MS 38829, or by telephone at (601) 728-5138.

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1st, Corinth to host workshop

Eva Nell Hunter, media library director at Central Church in Decatur, Ala., will lead a free workshop entitled "Visual Promotion with Children's Activities" on Saturday, March 1, at First Church (501 Main Street) in Corinth. The workshop, sponsored by Alcorn Association, will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m. No childcare will be provided. For more information or to make reservations, call Alcorn Association at (601) 286-8215 for First Church, Corinth at (601) 286-2208.



TESTING THE LINE — Mark Thomas Bowles and his father Mike inspect a new fishing tackle and bait at the family fishing seminar held at North Greenwood Church. Professional bass fisherman gave advice on fishing and shared the gospel at the evangelistic event. (Photo by Carl M. White)

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CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH of Eureka, Missouri is prayerfully accepting resumes until March 15, 1997 for a dynamic, full-time Youth/Music Minister to serve in a rapidly growing community. Send resumes to Central

Baptist Church, PO Box 66, Eureka, MO 63025, Attn. Search Committee.

BAPTISTRY/BATHTUB REPAIR. Porcelain or fiberglass. No job too large or small. Statewide service. No mileage charge. K&K Bathtub Repair, 1526 Gardner Blvd., Columbus, MS 39702; 1-800-349-2882.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED by growing church, located in Central Mississippi. Send resume to East Philadelphia Baptist Church, PO Box 304, Philadelphia, MS 39350.

PEWS FOR SALE: Call Northcrest Baptist Church 601-482-3498, Meridian, MS. Leave your name and phone number with the secretary.

PULPIT, 26 SOLID OAK, RUST FABRIC PEWS, communion table, two chairs \$8,000. 601-736-6462 or 601-736-0757.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC needed for medium-sized church that utilizes a "blend" of music (traditional and praise). Must have heart for God and for people. If interested, please send resume to CrossPoint Baptist Church, PO Box 80598, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

EXPERIENCED FULL-TIME MINISTER OF

MUSIC/YOUTH. Send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 1601 Chickasawba, Blytheville, AR 72315 ATTN: Pastor.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH wanted. Contact the church office for informational packet or send resume to Temple Baptist Church, 15120 Hwy. 613, Pascagoula, MS 39581. (601) 588-6245.

USED CHURCH PEWS FOR SALE. Price: Negotiable. Call Pastor Chris Wheeler at (601) 943-6518 (leave message). Bassfield Baptist Church.

YOUTH GROUPS NEEDED FOR SUMMER MISSIONS: For information, cities, dates, costs call 1-800-299-0385, Youth on Mission, Box 2095, Rocky Mount, NC 27802.

CUSTOM STAINED GLASS windows for churches and homes. Stained Glassworks, Inc. 1-800-605-2970. Columbus, MS.

WANTED: FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH. First Baptist Church Collins, MS. (601) 765-6279.

MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resume to Smokey Young, Harrisburg Baptist Church, 1800 West Main, Tupelo, MS 38801.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



William Carey College music ministry team, Undivided, is available for worship services, retreats, and youth activities. The members are (back row, left) Jason Bowman, Louisville, Ky.; Angela Ray, New Orleans, La.; Amanda Hughes, Louisville, Ky.; Kevin Scarborough, Foxworth; (front row) Jennifer Donohoe, Eupora; Lori Parker, Batesville; Ginger Reeves, Columbia; and Alicia Lowery, Baton Rouge, La. For engagement information contact Tim Glaze at (601) 582-6161.

The Mississippi College Theatre Department will present the play, "An Inspector Calls", Feb. 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 at 7:00 p.m. in Aven Little Theater of Aven Hall. Feb. 23 will be a 2:00 p.m. matinee. Admission for Mississippi college students, faculty, and staff is \$3, all others \$5. For reservations call 925-3453.

The Sue Price Lipsey Lectureship will be held at Mississippi College, Feb. 20, 7 p.m. in the B.C. Rogers Student Center. Craig Turner, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene,

Tex. will be the speaker. Turner served as chair of the Mississippi College English Department from 1985-92.

Mississippi College Office of Continuing Education is offering a variety of spring classes.

Word Perfect 6.1, March 24 and 31, and April 7 and 14 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in Self Hall. The class is limited to 20 participants. The cost is \$100 per person. Debbie Norris will be the instructor.

Intermediate Calligraphy, March 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Jennings Hall. The cost is \$70 per person with supplies included.

The Historical Genealogist, Feb. 24 and March 3, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in Jennings Hall. The cost is \$35 per person.

Beginning American Sign Language, Wed. evenings 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. beginning March 19 - May 7 in Jennings Hall. The cost is \$50 per person.

Professional Image Update, a one-day seminar held on March 17, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. in Jennings Hall. The cost is \$10

per person.

Yoga for Health, a 10-week program beginning on March 17, 5:30 - 7:00 in Jennings Hall. The cost is \$60.00 per person. Rebecca Laney will be the instructor.

Test Reviews including Preparing for the GMAT and GRE, are scheduled two months prior to each national test date, and each consists of 16 hours of class time. The cost is \$195 which includes all four sessions and will meet in Jennings Hall. Test date for the GRE is April 12; test dates for the GMAT are March 15 and June 21.

For additional information or a complete schedule of dates and times for any class offerings call Continuing Education Office at (601) 925-3301 or (601) 925-3265.

Higher Education Appreciation Day/Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE) at William Carey College (WCC) honored one student and one faculty member on Feb. 11 during the Tenth Annual HEADWAE program.

John Miller, a communication and history major from Columbia, received special recognition from the Mississippi Legislature as the HEADWAE student honored from Carey. Miller, son of John and Mildred Miller of Columbia, is a member of the WCC state and Pi Kappa Delta (PKD) forensics honorary bi-province championship speech team. He serves as president of

PKD and Alpha Chi honor society.

Shannon Robert, assistant professor of theatre and communication, received special recognition from the Mississippi Legislature as the HEADWAE faculty member honored from Carey. Robert, author and lyricist of the original musical, "It Could Have Happened Once Upon A Time", recently accompanied the Carey theatre to the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Murfreesboro, Tenn. She was recently appointed Mississippi Theatre Association College and University Vice Chair.

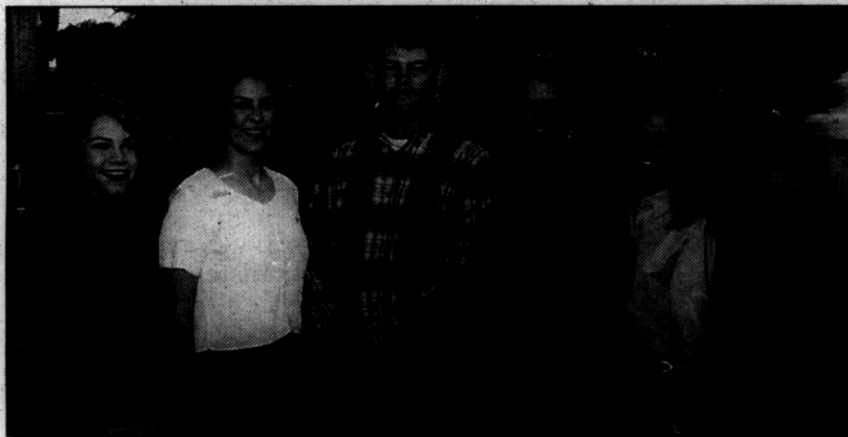
William Carey College recently hosted over 350 Acteens. Following greetings by Chancellor Jim Edwards and welcome by Marjean Patterson of the Woman's Missionary Union, they participated in a drama program led by the Carey Baptist Student Union (BSU). Tim Glaze, BSU director and former missionary kid in Argentina, shared experiences as a participant in his parents' mission work. The Acteens were entertained by a musical quartet including April Taylor, Rebecca Arthur, Michelle Herrin, and Meta Blanchard; were taught cheers by the Crusader Cheerleaders; and cheered the Lady Sadlers basketball team to victory over Belhaven.



John Miller and Shannon Robert

W. Kendall, pastor, dies

William David Kendall, pastor of Parkway Church, Houston, died Tues., Feb. 11. Funeral services were held Thurs., Feb. 13 at Parkway Church. Survivors include his wife, Ruby Wardlaw Kendall of Houston; daughters, Donna Sharp, Huntsville, Ala.; Denise Womack, Huntsville, Ala.; and Debra Kendall, Gallatin, Texas; son, John Kendall, Hamilton; brother, John Kendall, Baldwin; sister, Elwanda Walters, Houston; 3 grandchildren, Adam Sharp, Chelsea Sharp, and Josh Womack; one granddaughter, Lindsey Dupree, preceded him in death.



The Baptist Student Union at William Carey College recently announced the members of its drama team, UPS-COD, which stands for Ultimate Power Source-Christ Only Delivers. The members are (left to right) Mandy Trammell, Kim Morris, Todd Cole, Ashley Fitzhugh, Jill Asmussen, and Erin Smith. UPS-COD is available for worship services, youth activities, and retreats. For information contact Tim Glaze at (601) 582-6161.



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1997

Annie Armstrong

Mississippi pastor also ministers in Alaska

By Lynne Jones
SBC Home Mission Board



LAYING GROUNDWORK — Dean Blankenship (front left), director of Southeast Island Ministries in Thorne Bay, Alaska, helps build a house for the new pastor of Thorne Bay Baptist Mission. Assisting Blankenship are Sandy Sherman (rear), pastor of Emmanuel Church, Ocean Springs, and Sarah Nunley of Coffman Cove, Alaska. (HMB photo by Don Rutledge)

THORNE BAY, Alaska — Home Mission Board church planter Dean Blankenship and his wife, Nadine, live on an island.

They walk country roads, visit small communities and hold worship services in a small cafe accompanied by bluegrass music.

In addition, they are visited with some frequency by a determined Mississippi pastor in whom they find great encouragement. Sounds like an ideal place to serve the Lord, doesn't it?

Now consider that the roads are unpaved logging trails, and the small communities with names like Klawock, Nauketi and Meyers Chuck are construction or logging camps populated by transient workers.

The island is Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, and home for the Blankenships is Thorne Bay. Blankenship is a bivocational pastor in the Tongass Baptist Association and among the home missionaries featured in this year's Week of Prayer for Home Missions, March 2-9.

Alaska, the place where people either "love it right away and stay, or hate it right away

and leave," offers a wide range of ministry opportunities.

"The people come here looking for work, looking to make their fortune," says Blankenship.

"It's rugged here, which is very tough on families, especially the teenage girls," he said.

Families fall apart. Alcoholism, teen pregnancy, and drug addiction are very common.

The Blankenships find that their ministry is more than just evangelizing the lost.

It's building relationships with people and helping to heal their hurts.

To support themselves, the Blankenships run a cedar mill.

The work is hard and the risk is great.

In the eight years they've been in Alaska, they have rebuilt the mill twice — once after the roof collapsed and again after a fire gutted the property.

Being bivocational is also a blessing. "When I go into a community for a service, a lot of people come," says Blankenship. "They say, 'This guy is one of us.' I can talk to the hardest, meanest, worldliest man in any logging camp. We work hard and that's the way we minister."

As tough as it is in Alaska, the Blankenships never feel alone. "I'll never forget the day I stopped on a bridge and said to the Lord, 'I can't go any farther. I can't see any way that this is going to work.' And in the quiet, he said to me, 'You just keep doing what you do, and I'll take care of the impossible.'"

Sanford "Sandy" Sherman, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Ocean Springs, is a believer in the Blankenships' work.

He made his third mission trip to Alaska's Prince of Wales Island in September 1996.

His first two trips, in May

1994 and June 1995, were made in connection with the Mississippi/Alaska partnership project, while his last trip was a combination vacation/mission trip that included his family.

Sherman described the Prince of Wales Island area as an area with a mix of evangelized and non-evangelized people, many of whom have been receptive to the Gospel.

"It can be a hard area in which to serve. Progress can be slow," he explained.

However, the efforts of mission volunteers like Sherman and HMB personnel like the Blankenships are showing positive results.

"In Craig, we saturated the town and held a Vacation Bible School. There are a lot of Native Americans, and there is a mission nearby. The strongest

church so far has been Coffman Cove," Sherman said.

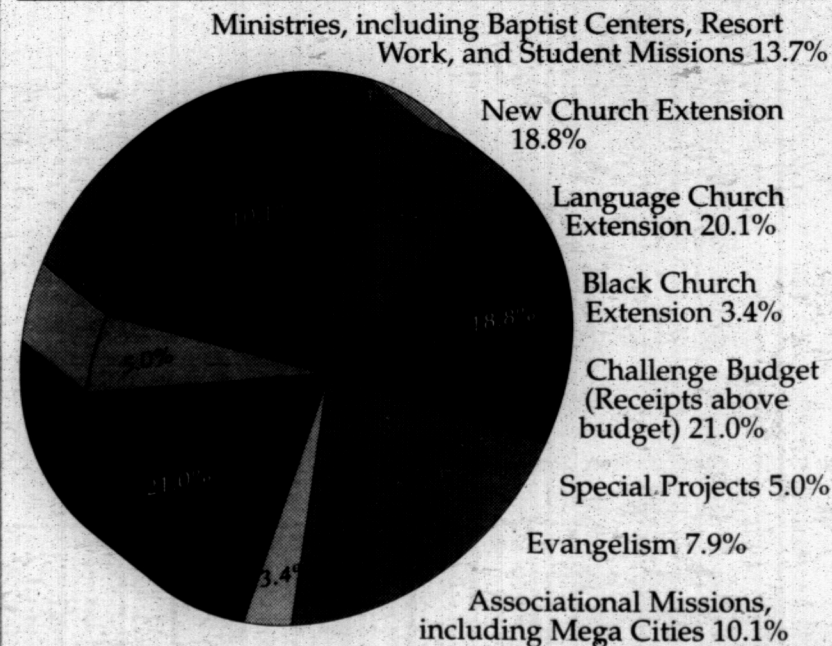
He also mentioned that Blankenship will soon be in Jackson Association for a series of World Missions Conferences, and will preach a revival at Emmanuel Church on Feb. 27-March 2.

For more information on Blankenship's schedule, contact Jackson Association at P.O. Box 1726, Pascagoula, MS 39568. Telephone: (601) 769-7101.

For more information on partnership missions, contact the Partnership Missions Office of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Editor William H. Perkins Jr. contributed to this article.

1997 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Allocations Goal: \$50,000,000



ANNIE ARMSTRONG EASTER OFFERING 1996 RECEIPTS TOP TEN MISSISSIPPI CHURCHES

1. First Church	Jackson	\$91,594
2. First Church	Columbus	37,755
3. Broadmoor Church	Jackson	35,256
4. First Church	Brandon	23,452
5. First Church	Clinton	21,161
6. Temple Church	Hattiesburg	20,757
7. Trinity Church	Southaven	18,313
8. First Church	Greenville	17,596
9. First Church	Laurel	17,415
10. Alta Woods Church	Jackson	16,998

Source: Annual Church Profiles
MBCB Computer Information Services

ANNIE ARMSTRONG EASTER OFFERING 1996 RECEIPTS TOP TEN MISSISSIPPI CHURCHES IN PER MEMBER GIVING

1. Oak Grove Church	Lake	\$51.86
2. Oak Hill Church	Pontotoc	47.86
3. Calvary Church	Gloster	29.23
4. Pace Church	Pace	27.58
5. Lucien Church	Brookhaven	25.36
6. Mantee Church	Mantee	25.03
7. Center Ridge Church	DeKalb	24.65
8. Shiloh Church	Port Gibson	21.75
9. Pleasant Hill Church	Union Church	21.63
10. New Hope Church	Calhoun City	21.05

Source: Annual Church Profiles
MBCB Computer Information Services

Strong Easter Offering

FOR HOME MISSIONS

Annie Armstrong Offering sets '96 record

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — For the fourth year in a row, Southern Baptists gave a record amount to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

The year-end total for the 1996 offering was \$39,508,440, according to Ernest J. Kelley, Home Mission Board (HMB) interim president.

Kelley announced the record offering to the executive board of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) during their annual meeting, which began Jan. 11 in Birmingham, Ala.

WMU, along with the

Brotherhood Commission and HMB, promotes the offering in Southern Baptist churches.

The nearly 200 participants in the WMU meeting applauded news of the record offering, and Kelley expressed appreciation for their support.

"Home missions has no greater friend than Woman's Missionary Union."

"On behalf of our missionaries and those whom they serve across the country, thank you and God bless your dedication to missions," he said.

Kelley singled out the efforts of several state conventions

which led in increasing their offerings over the previous year, including Alaska with a 10% increase.

He noted Canada and Iowa had nine percent gains.

Kelley also congratulated those states which led in dollar increases including Alabama, where Southern Baptists gave \$167,000 more in 1996 than 1995.

Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina also increased their giving more than \$100,000.

According to Kelley, the annual home missions offering has grown 214% since 1978, —

more than any other aspect of Southern Baptist financial life including local church income.

"I believe the continued record mission offerings are a reflection of Southern Baptists' commitment to reach our nation for Jesus Christ," Kelley told Baptist Press.

"The United States is Southern Baptists' base."

If a strong base is not maintained and even strengthened, the next generation will experience a reduced commitment to foreign missions and theological education as well as home missions," he said.

Season of
Prayer
for
HOME
MISSIONS
March 2-9

Woman finds ministry in own hometown

By Teresa Dickens

SBC Woman's Missionary Union

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Lora Smith's ministry in her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio, began some 12 years before she received the distinction of "missionary" by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB).

In fact, she had only been a Christian for a few months when she began serving others through a ministry center in downtown Cleveland.

As director of church and community ministries for Greater Cleveland Baptist Association, Smith is one of the missionaries featured in this year's Week of Prayer for Home Missions, March 2-9.

Smith's response to the call to meet the needs of individuals in destitute situations came within months after becoming a Christian.

She heard about Victory Baptist Chapel in downtown Cleveland through her participation in Baptist Young Women at church.

She visited the chapel, which functions as a ministry center, and soon became a full-time volunteer, using her skills to work with the children in the neighborhood.

Eventually, Smith and her family moved to live near the chapel. When the pastor left, she was asked to direct the center, which she did for nine months.

A new pastor came to the mission in January 1984.

In November 1983, Smith returned to school, graduating at the top of her class in May 1985 with an associate's degree in computer management systems analysis.

Because of her success in school, she was hired immediately at a job making a very good salary, but she was not content.

"My mind was always on the needs at the center," she recalled. "It was as if God was saying, 'You don't belong here.'"

After only five weeks at her new job, she resigned. Smith believed she was cheating the company since her mind and heart were not in her work.

The following Sunday, she went to the altar during the invitation and dedicated her life to full-time service at the center.

Because she did not have a bachelor's or seminary degree, she first served as a Missions Service Corps volunteer, raising her

salary through churches in the association.

She worked at the center in this capacity until 1993, and during this time at the center, Smith returned to college and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and urban studies with a minor in gerontology.

When the church and community position came open in the associational office, several people encouraged her to apply for the position.

She resisted these urgings since she was content at Victory, but finally gave in because she believes God speaks to Christians through other believers, she said.

Smith assumed her current position Oct. 1, 1993.

Smith has helped organize the Ministry Training Institute, which she describes as a training program to motivate Christians to become "ministering saints."

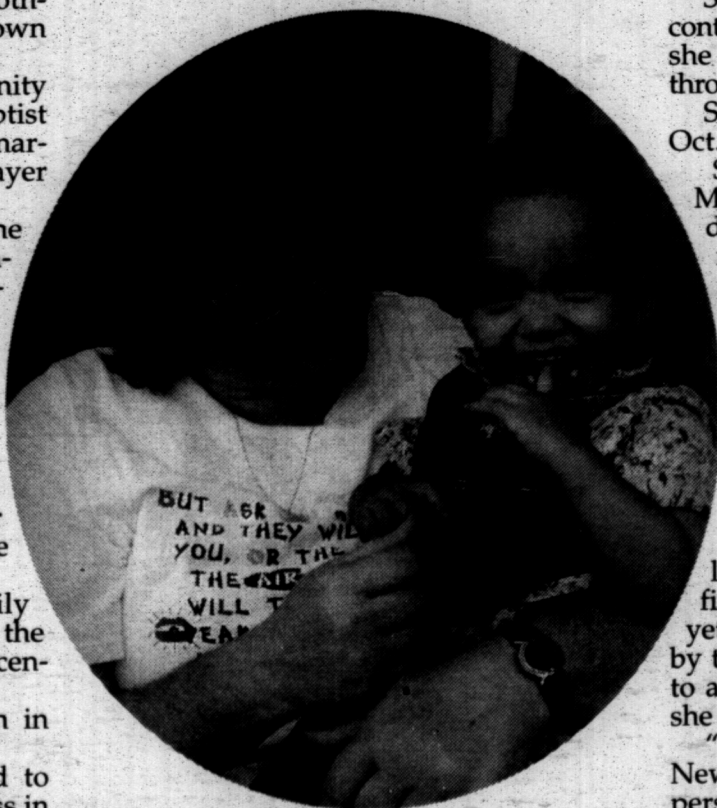
The institute not only provides academic training for participants, but also requires them to start a ministry which fits their gifts and meets a need.

Smith sees the institute as a natural fulfillment of the 1997 Season of Home Missions theme, "Start Something New."

"Start Something New" involves looking around the community and finding groups of people who have not yet been reached by the church or touched by the gospel, and then 'become all things to all men so that some might be saved,'" she said, referencing 1 Corinthians 9:22.

"In terms of ministry, 'Start Something New' could be starting a support group to persons with AIDS, starting a Bible club in an apartment complex, starting a feeding ministry with migrants, or starting a Sunday School class or WMU group in a church," she suggested.

"Wherever we can expand the body of Christ to meet the needs in the community in which we sit, would certainly be the fulfillment of 'Start Something New,'" she said.



ANSWERING THE CALL — An important part of ministry is nurturing children. Lora Smith (left), church and community ministries director for the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association, enjoys the company of a child who lives in Bear Creek Apartments in the Bedford Heights area of Cleveland, Ohio. (HMB photo by Don Rutledge)

National Goal:
\$50,000,000

Your church's
goal:

\$ _____

Annie Armstrong
Easter Offering
1996 receipts
by state convention

1. Texas	\$5,503,505
2. North Carolina	4,464,190
3. Georgia	3,790,228
4. Alabama	3,727,521
5. Tennessee	2,916,388
6. South Carolina	2,746,486
7. Mississippi	2,537,266
8. Missouri	1,352,031
9. Kentucky	1,310,394
10. Louisiana	1,299,084

Source: Accounting Department
SBC Home Mission Board

Brotherhood Commission axes four jobs

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (ABP) — The Brotherhood Commission announced four job cuts Feb. 3 as part of an ongoing restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), Brotherhood president Jim Williams confirmed Feb. 3.

The restructuring, which reduces the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, calls for merging the Memphis, Tenn.-based Brotherhood Commission with the Home Mission Board (HMB) in Atlanta and the Radio

and Television Commission (RTVC) in Fort Worth, Texas.

Among the four eliminated positions is the editor of "Missions Today," one of three denominational magazines to be replaced by a new publication of the Atlanta-based North American Mission Board (NAMB), a new agency formed by the merger.

The first wave of layoffs resulting from the merger came early in December, when five RTVC workers learned their

jobs were being eliminated.

Jack Johnson, president of the RTVC, said Feb. 4 it is still uncertain how many jobs will be lost.

Unlike the Brotherhood Commission, which is being closed down completely, television facilities for NAMB will remain in Fort Worth.

Those decisions will probably be made within four to six weeks, he said.

In other news related to the restructuring, the Historical

Library and Archives will remain in Nashville, Tenn., after the Historical Commission closes in June.

Responsibility for maintaining the archives shifts to the council of presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

Bill Sumners, director of library and archives for the Historical Commission, will stay on as executive director of the collection, said Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

HOMEcomings

Immanuel, Hattiesburg: 90th year; March 16; Elmer Nielsen, oldest living pastor of Immanuel will be guest speaker for morning worship service. Following the fellowship meal, the music ministry of Immanuel will present a program of musical worship. An informal get-together is scheduled for Sat., 6 p.m.; Nathan L. Barber Sr., pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Sandersville: March 9-12; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Perry Neal, Montgomery, Ala., evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, Lucedale, Miss., music; Donnie V. Parker, pastor.

Holcomb (North Central): youth revival; March 7-9; services, 7 p.m. nightly and 11 a.m. on Sunday; Gary Jackson, evangelist; James McPhail, minister of music at Holcomb Church, music; Randy Ashley, pastor.

First, Houlika: Feb. 23-26; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; first revival in new sanctuary since a fire destroyed the church two years ago; Danny Lanier, Little Rock, preaching and singing; Gary Blair, pastor.

First, McLaurin: Feb. 23-27; Sunday, 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; Mon. - Thurs., 7:00 p.m. Lunch will be served following the Sunday morning service. Paul G. Jones II, Clinton, executive director-treasurer, Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention will be the evangelist.

INTRODUCING THE 6TH ANNUAL

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MARCH 2-6, 1997



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Monday Through Thursday
March 3-6 Morning Services
9 A.M., 10 A.M., 11 A.M.

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Retired pastor Ramsay dies

Bob N. Ramsay, retired pastor of Calvary Church, Tupelo died Sat., Feb. 8 at the Cedars Health Center after a lengthy illness.

During his 40 years of ministry, Ramsay pastored churches in Tennessee, Texas, and Mississippi.

He traveled extensively on mission trips to Russia, South Africa, Japan, Korea, India,



Ramsay

Philippines, Italy, and England.

He also served on a number of boards of directors including chairman of Brookhaven's B-Racial Committee.

Services were held Mon., Feb. 10 at Calvary Church.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Geri Ramsay of Tupelo; daughters, Sarah Ramsay, Dallas, Texas; Missy Barnett, Winter Park, Fla.; and Jan Ramsay, Jackson;

Sons, Bob Ramsay, Hattiesburg; and Brad Ramsay, Fairfax, Va.; sister, Mrs. John Clyde Robinson, Beaufort, S.C.; brother, B.L. Ramsay, Lodge, S.C.; and four grandchildren.

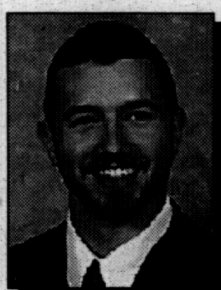
NAMES IN THE NEWS

A l v a McCollum, member of First Church, Pontotoc, will celebrate her 100th birthday on Feb. 22, 2:30 p.m. at Trinity Health Care Center, Columbus.



McCollum

K e v i n Crozier, Foxworth, has surrendered to the gospel ministry and is available for revivals, pulpit supply, and the pastorate. Crozier completed his work at Jones County Junior College and will be entering William Carey College this fall. He is married to the former



Crozier

April Stringer of Foxworth and is the son of Nelson and Vivian Crozier of Laurel. Crozier can be reached at (601) 736-8971 or 668 New Hope Church Road, Foxworth, MS 39483.

Tony Stroud was licensed and ordained at Faith Church, Ovett. He is available to serve as supply preacher. His address is 90 Monk Cochran Loop, Beaumont, MS 39423 or (601) 788-6218.

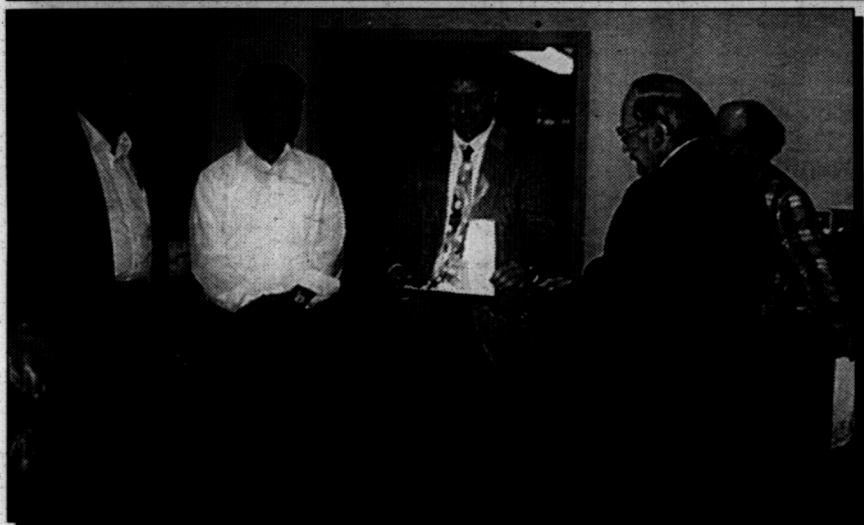


Start Something New
CHURCH STARTING

*Season of Prayer
for
Home Missions*

MARCH 2-9

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Montrose Church, Jasper County, held a dedication and note burning service for its new Family Life Center on Nov. 14. Pictured, from left, are Eddie Norvell, building chairman; Carl Matthews, deacon; Bill Hutto, pastor; and Walt Roemen and R. B. Oswalt, deacons.

Victory Temple Church is seeking a mature, spiritually minded individual with seminary training as pastor for this congregation of 300 members. For more information contact: Gerald Husband, Director of Administration, Victory Temple

Baptist Church, 2700 East Alexander Street, P. O. Box 4905 Greenville, MS 38704-4905.

University of Mobile, Mobile, Ala. will host an open house for all high school juniors and seniors Sat., Feb. 22. Prospective students will have the opportunity to meet faculty, learn about admissions and financial aid, take campus



Southside Church, Aberdeen, recently held a "Note-Burning Ceremony" to celebrate the final payment of the Family Life Center constructed in 1987 at a cost of \$180,000.00. Left to right are building committee members Ruth Brasfield; Roscoe Ivy; George Collins Sr.; Steve Hillman; Faye White; R.L. Black, trustee; L.C. Rye; and Kenneth E. Walters, pastor.

tours, and experience campus life. Students visiting from out-of-town may make arrangements to stay on campus Fri., Feb. 21. Advanced reservations are required. For more information, or to make overnight reservations, contact the University of Mobile Office of Admissions at (334) 675-5990, ext. 273 or 1-800-WIN-RAMS.

The Men's Ministry of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, is hosting a **Wild Game Banquet** on Fri., Feb., 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Local men of the church will be providing samples of their own cuisine, and a complete meal (including chicken for the not-so-wild-about-game-crowd)

will be served. Prizes will be awarded in several cooking categories. Melvin Tingle, TV host of Mississippi Outdoors and a member of Clarke-Venable Memorial Church, Decatur, will be the guest speaker. Tickets are \$4.00 per person and may be obtained by calling the church office at 366-8433 or contacting Eric Bragg at 856-2640, Dennis Morgan at 856-4583, or Marcus Peagler at 856-0872 before Feb. 24.

Longs Peak Association of Southern Baptist Churches, Greeley, Colo. is accepting resumes for the position of Director of Missions/Church Starter Strategist through March 31. For further information call (970) 330-2130 or (970) 352-7001. Resumes may be faxed to (970) 330-2762 or (970) 352-7006.

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Old Hebron Church, Covington-Jefferson Davis Association, ordained **George Henry Riley Jr.** (above, left) as deacon on Jan. 19. Randy Gardner (right) is pastor.

STAFF CHANGES

Holcomb Church, Holcomb, has called **James McPhail** as minister of music and youth effective Feb. 2. His previous place of service was Enid Lake Church, Pope.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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R MBRE NQFLFGILF AHNI
XIA, NQBN XF MQBUU
ERF RH XIAL MRHM: GIL
RG XF CFURFTE HIN
NQBN R BV QF, XF
MQBUU ERF RH XIAL
MRHM.

WIQH FRPQN:

NZFHNX-GIAL

Clue: T equals V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Nine Fifty.

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LIFE AND WORK

Be ready!

Matthew 24:36-51

By Thad Moore

There is a story about a man who left his home to go on a long journey. He put a manager in charge of his property. The manager kept the estate in exquisite condition. The manager was asked about his motivation for doing such a fine job. He replied: "I knew one day my master would return." It can not be overstated, Jesus is coming back one day for his people.

A certain coming (24:36-41). Verse thirty six is the thesis statement for this lesson. Jesus teaches us what we need to know about his second coming. Amidst the skepticism and apathy in our world, believers can

be certain of the return of Christ. God is the sovereign Lord of history and is always at work. He created the world and will close it in his perfect time. The rule of God will vanquish the evil forces of the world.

While it is a certainty Jesus is coming back, we are completely uncertain as to when he will come back. All attempts to speculate on the day or the hour of his coming are futile. God is God and man is man and the two should never be confused.

Jesus does tell us that his second coming will be sudden. In Noah's day the people were liv-

ing wickedly and caught by surprise. They were destroyed. People will be about their regular daily task, some will be taken and others left. We are to make personal preparation for his coming.

A call to watchfulness (42-44). Because we don't know the time of his coming we are to be ready at all times. Discipleship demands faithfulness, not attempts to calculate the day of Christ's return. He is coming back when we least expect his return.

Jesus makes his point by telling a parable. The story is about a house owner and a thief. If the householder had known when the thief was coming he would have guarded his house at all times. Since we do not know the time of Christ's return, we are to be prepared at all times. In view of

Jesus' plain statements about his second coming it is astonishing that some spend so much time trying to figure out the date of his return. He wants watchfulness and faithfulness, not guess work.

Life is a gift from God. It comes to us one moment at a time. Because we know our future is secure we can accept every moment of life with joy and gratitude. Then we become responsible followers of Christ.

A question of Faithfulness (45-51). Jesus illustrates his concern about preparedness with another parable. This parable is about a servant in charge of servants. One servant is responsible and is concerned for those under his care. He feeds them at the appropriate time. This servant is put in charge of the master's possessions. Another servant was not prepared. He postpones his responsibilities and lives a wicked life. Then the

master comes, unexpectedly. The wicked servant is cast out to the place of the hypocrites.

The parable might be summed up as follows. First of all, God judges us on the basis of our stewardship with the tasks he gives us. Secondly, faithful stewardship requires perseverance, because we do not know the time of Christ coming. Thirdly, those who postpone and do evil, may suddenly find it is too late to amend their ways.

It seems as though Jesus is giving us a test to see if we are ready for his coming. The real examination is not what would you do if you knew Jesus was coming. We can be certain of his return. The real test is how do we live in his absence. Do we have the faith to trust God and be faithful in our Christian responsibilities?

Moore is pastor, First Church, Holly Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Related to the King

Matthew 25

By Mark Long

Matthew 25 continues Jesus' response to the disciples' question concerning the end times (24:3). Jesus taught about the final judgment. In Revelation, John confirmed that all people, the lost and redeemed, will give an accounting for their deeds.

The Judgment (25:31-33). Whereas Jesus came the first time humble like a lamb led to the slaughter, with his next coming he will reveal his authority in judgment of all people. Using the masculine gender "people" rather than the neutral probably indicates that individuals are referenced.

Until Christ's return the righteous and unrighteous

cohabit, sometimes not even recognizing their own true identity. Christ will separate those who are his from those who are not (cf. Ezek. 34:17-25).

The Reward of the Righteous (25:34-36). The reward for God's righteous is God's Kingdom itself. From the parable of the talents (vv. 14-30) and other scriptures, God's reward is positions of authority and rulership in his Kingdom.

Life on this earth may be viewed as a prep-school for eternity. The daily choices of compassion and ministry to the humblest and vilest of people reveal and develop the image of God in our lives.

The Surprise of the

Righteous (25:37-39). In 24:4-6 Jesus warned the disciples not to be preoccupied with the time and events of the end-times, or they could fall victim to false leaders. We often fail and betray Jesus during times considered least important, or times of preoccupation (cf. John 18:15-27).

For those in close relationship with Jesus, pleasing and serving him can be the same way. Ministering to the needs of others comes so naturally that often they do not realize they are performing fantastic ministry in the Kingdom. The righteous depicted in verses 37-39 were the same way. They were surprised to discover their service to their Lord.

Many times we struggle for something good we may do because we are "Christian." When we finally do discover something and do it, we think we have performed the incredi-

ble for God. Jesus said his yoke was easy, and burden light. Service, for the redeemed, flows naturally. It is part of their new nature. It cannot be forced. When we feel absolutely worn out from serving God, we know we are depending on our strength. This is not salvation. Salvation's works are not wearisome to the redeemed.

The Basis of Judgment (25:40). In a recent episode of E.R. a resident complained of excessive pressure by his supervising doctor. As a witness, another resident lied about the pressure, minimizing the doctor's actions. Carter did not realize the personal crises the other resident was in. The resident lost hope and committed suicide.

Often we do not realize the full weight our decisions to extend or deny compassion has onto others. Jesus realizes, and he uses this standard for judgment. If we are Jesus' sheep, his image will abide in us, and

will be evidenced in actions that reflect his actions while on this earth.

The Punishment of the Condemned (25:41, 46). Whereas to the righteous Jesus bids, "Come" (v. 34), to the unrighteous he commands, "Depart from me" (v. 41). Though the righteous enjoy eternal life and reward, the condemned endure eternal punishment. I have heard some argue that the unsaved will simply cease to exist if God is truly loving. Jesus' words negate this idea. The same word describes punishment and life in verse 46—eternal.

Though eternal punishment is not a pleasant thought, we must realize its reality. In 24:45 Jesus indicated that God gives us the choice to be either a faithful or unfaithful servant. The choices we make in this life he enforces for eternity. If we don't live for him, we won't live with him.

Long is pastor, First Church, Perkinson.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Be a faithful worker

Acts 16:1-5; I Cor. 4:14-17; Phil. 2:19-22; II Tim 1:4-7

By Mary Ellen Powell

Timothy was a young man, but in spite of his age, his life was an example of integrity, faithfulness, and concern for others.

Good Reputation (Acts 16:1-5). Timothy was well respected by others and his good reputation led Paul to choose him as a traveling companion in the journeys to come. We can all give the encouragement of a well-spoken word in a person's behalf. As important as it is to speak well of others, it is also important to maintain such a reputation that others are able to speak good words in our behalf.

Timothy's reputation was backed by his actions. Our

actions must be such that we are seen as being of good repute. This effects how we are seen as individuals and how others see Christ. It is stated that Timothy was circumcised before he began his ministry to the Jews in the area of Lystra and Derbe. This was not a required action because the Jerusalem council had declared that circumcision was not necessary for Gentiles, but Paul felt being circumcised would help Timothy's ministry to the Jews. Regardless of why Timothy was circumcised, it is evident that he was willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of ministering to others.

Reliable Teacher (I Cor. 4:14-17). In these verses, Paul

describes Timothy as being "Faithful in the Lord." What a description! Paul trusted Timothy to be his representative at a church where he had poured out his life. Precious things are not trusted to those who are untrustworthy, and nothing is more precious than the work of Christ. For us to be used in God's work, we must first concentrate on being faithful to God and allow him to provide opportunities for service.

Compassionate Minister (Phil. 2:19-22). No one can effectively minister in a situation unless they have a genuine concern for those to whom they minister. Timothy genuinely cared for the church at Philippi and had the interests of Christ at heart. Having the interests of Christ at heart should be the goal of all those who seek to minister in his name.

Precious Heritage (II Tim.

1:4-5). Timothy was encouraged to be faithful to Christ throughout his life by his mother and grandmother. As parents, we must strive to bring our children up in faithfulness and devotion to God by providing a Christ-focused family environment which involves prayer, Bible Study, church attendance, and unconditional love, among other things. This commitment must move beyond our own families to those who are brought into our midst, ones who may be without a Christian example at home. It is the responsibility of the church to take care of those who need "parenting" in Christ.

Gifted Worker (II Tim. 1:6-7). Timothy was also encouraged to remember his calling and renew his fervor. Paul wanted Timothy to remember the greatness of the call and the grace given to him by God to carry it out. All of us need to be reminded of what God has for

us—a life of commitment to Christ and his work.

Paul continued to encourage Timothy with a reminder that God did not give him fear, but gave him power, love, and self-discipline. These same gifts are given to all believers. How encouraging when called to a difficult task to remember that we are not to be afraid of what lies ahead—fear is not of God. It is also encouraging to realize that God has given us power—the boldness in him to fulfill our calling; love—love for Christ's people and his work that can only come from him; and self-discipline—strength to be controlled not by our circumstances, but by what God has for us.

Let us all take heart from the example of a life lived with integrity, compassion, and commitment and be encouraged by all the things given to us by Christ.

Powell is a member of First Church, Clinton.

Each January we evaluate the cash gifts received in Village offices during the previous 12 months. In this evaluation it has become customary to list Mississippi Baptist churches in descending order of designated cash gifts. This does not include no-cash gift items that many churches contribute. This evaluation and analysis has become known as the "Honor Roll of Churches."

RANK	CHURCH NAME, CITY	1996 GIFTS	RANK	CHURCH NAME, CITY	1996 GIFTS	RANK	CHURCH NAME, CITY	1996 GIFTS	RANK	CHURCH NAME, CITY	1996 GIFTS
1	First Baptist Church, Mc Comb	16978.61	125	Bethlehem Baptist Church, Pinola	2485.09	248	Union Baptist Church, Corinth	1445.00			
2	Morrison Heights Baptist Church, Clinton	13206.55	126	First Baptist Church, Ita Bena	2483.42	249	Old Pearl Valley Baptist Church, Philadelphia	1445.00			
3	First Baptist Church, Water Valley	13042.00	127	Shiloh Baptist Church, Port Gibson	2454.07	250	Union Baptist Church, Meridian	1443.75			
4	Rolling Creek Baptist Church, Quitman	12355.33	128	Providence, Hattiesburg	2421.00	251	Moak's Creek Baptist Church, Summit	1441.00			
5	Russell Baptist Church, Meridian	10670.00	129	Edna Baptist Church, Columbia	2330.69	252	Prentiss Baptist Church, Prentiss	1440.20			
6	Hillcrest Baptist Church, Jackson	10510.08	130	Bowmar Avenue Baptist Church, Vicksburg	2317.80	253	Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson	1437.00			
7	First Baptist Church, Richton	10025.34	131	Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson	2304.00	254	New Bethel Baptist Church, Carrollton	1431.96			
8	Forest Baptist Church, Forest	8835.00	132	Dockery Baptist Church, Cleveland	2300.00	255	Bethel Baptist Church, Poplarville	1429.94			
9	Rienzi Baptist Church, Rienzi	8794.22	133	Jericho Baptist Church, Baldwin	2293.35	256	First Baptist Church, Eudora, Hernando	1426.50			
10	Bovina Baptist Church, Vicksburg	8770.00	134	D'Lo Baptist Church, D Lo	2286.59	257	Westwood Baptist Church, Meridian	1411.62			
11	Park Place Baptist Church, Brandon	8575.46	135	Woodland Hills Baptist Church, Jackson	2285.25	258	New Prospect Baptist Church, Iuka	1408.15			
12	First Baptist Church, Jackson	7876.00	136	Noxapater Baptist Church, Noxapater	2276.62	259	First Baptist Church, Biloxi	1404.94			
13	First Baptist Church, Corinth	7529.29	137	First Baptist Church, Bay St Lou	2254.21	260	West Baptist Church, West	1404.00			
14	First Baptist Church, Gulfport	7362.15	138	Anchor Baptist Church, Water Valley	2240.90	261	Taylor Baptist Church, Taylor	1400.00			
15	Williamsville Baptist Church, Kosciusko	7191.00	139	Mount Nebo Baptist Church, Collinsville	2235.31	262	Pine Grove Baptist Church, Picayune	1398.33			
16	First Baptist Church, Louisville	7117.21	140	New Hope Baptist Church, Monticello	2235.00	263	Flora Baptist Church, Flora	1397.00			
17	First Baptist Church, Brookhaven	7030.00	141	Ephesus Baptist Church, Forest	2225.00	264	Rocky Point Baptist Church, Carthage	1393.42			
18	Ackerman Baptist Church, Ackerman	7026.50	142	Center Hill Baptist Church, Ecru	2185.22	265	Ramah Baptist Church, Mc Call Creek	1389.37			
19	Bunker Hill Baptist Church, Columbia	6877.53	143	West Heights Baptist Church, Pontotoc	2178.16	266	Union Baptist Church, Nettleton	1388.00			
20	Indian Springs Baptist Church, Petal	6804.00	144	First Baptist Church, Abbeville	2175.76	267	Lawrence Baptist Honduras Mission, Monticello	1380.91			
21	Sylvarena Baptist Church, Raleigh	6786.73	145	Plainway Baptist Church, Laurel	2145.00	268	Kolola Springs Baptist Church, Caledonia	1376.88			
22	Harmony Baptist Church, Crystal Springs	6657.20	146	First Baptist Church, Pontotoc	2140.79	269	Macedonia Baptist Church, Brookhaven	1375.44			
23	Midway Baptist Church, Meridian	6550.00	147	Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson	2131.94	270	Beacon Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia	1375.00			
24	First Baptist Church, New Albany	6508.25	148	Valley Grove Baptist Church, Tupelo	2117.67	271	Branch Baptist Church, Morton	1374.19			
25	Reymond Baptist Church, Raymond	6450.00	149	Barton Baptist Church, Lucedale	2091.09	272	Shifalo Memorial Baptist Church, Kilm	1371.26			
26	First Baptist Church, Booneville	6437.04	150	Thrasher Baptist Church, Booneville	2087.92	273	Oak Hill Baptist Church, Booneville	1370.00			
27	Liberty Baptist Church, Liberty	6285.36	151	Chunky Baptist Church, Chunky	2068.00	274	Bucattuna Baptist Church, Meridian	1369.07			
28	First Baptist Church, Batesville	6022.00	152	New Harmony Baptist Church, Blue Springs	2060.78	275	Wellman Baptist Church, Bogue Chitto	1366.55			
29	First Baptist Church, Greenville	5753.26	153	Tylertown Baptist Church, Tylertown	2052.50	276	Williamsburg Baptist Church, Collins	1362.66			
30	Van Winkle Baptist Church, Jackson	5649.02	154	Pinelake Baptist Church, Brandon	2047.43	277	Monticello Baptist Church, Monticello	1340.00			
31	First Baptist Church, Waynesboro	5586.09	155	Grace Memorial Baptist Church, Gulfport	2018.08	278	Leflore Baptist Church, Holcomb	1335.00			
32	First Baptist Church, Quitman	5557.60	156	Beulah Baptist Church, Inverness	2013.42	279	Horseshoe Baptist Church, Tchula	1334.00			
33	First Baptist Church, Columbia	5490.28	157	First Baptist Church, Grenada	2003.00	280	First Baptist Church, Rolling Fork	1327.00			
34	Riverside Baptist Church, Monticello	5386.79	158	North Batesville Baptist Church, Batesville	2000.00	281	Davis Road Baptist Church, Terry	1314.49			
35	Calvary Baptist Church, Waynesboro	5374.70	159	Zion Hill Baptist Church, Wesson	1988.46	282	Christ Baptist Church, Greenwood	1314.31			
36	First Baptist Church, Kosciusko	5249.50	160	Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Dumas	1977.00	283	Longview Baptist Church, Belden	1302.00			
37	Leaf River Baptist Church, Collins	5185.00	161	Stanton Baptist Church, Natchez	1972.27	284	Tuscola Baptist Church, Lena	1300.00			
38	Highland Baptist Church, Vicksburg	5136.06	162	Bethlehem Baptist Church, Walnut	1966.51	285	Straight Bayou Baptist Church, Anguilla	1296.55			
39	Parkway Baptist Church, Clinton	5001.00	163	Trinity Baptist Church-Southaven, Southaven	1962.06	286	Oakland Heights Baptist Church, Meridian	1291.68			
40	Mount Zion Baptist Church-Tate, Independence	4999.92	164	First Baptist Church, Florence	1960.00	287	Heuck's Retreat Baptist Church, Brookhaven	1285.40			
41	Briar Hill Baptist Church, Florence	4950.00	165	Sturgis Baptist Church, Sturgis	1954.54	288	Bethel Baptist Church, Liberty	1270.00			
42	Ingomar Baptist Church, New Albany	4903.12	166	Beulah Baptist Church, Decatur	1938.00	289	Broadway Baptist Church, Olive Branch	1268.00			
43	Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Jackson	4856.00	167	Macedonia Baptist Church, Tupelo	1935.00	290	Grace Memorial Baptist Church, Tupelo	1266.25			
44	First Baptist Church, Brandon	4834.57	168	Eastside Baptist Church, Pearl	1934.62	291	First Baptist Church, Verona	1263.13			
45	Society Hill Baptist Church, Oak Vale	4753.77	169	First Baptist Church, Glendale, Hattiesburg	1933.50	292	Friendship Baptist, Church Sturgis	1260.81			
46	Immanuel Baptist Church, Vicksburg	4616.32	170	Hurley Baptist Church, Hurley	1930.53	293	Beulah Baptist Church, Myrtle	1258.00			
47	First Baptist Church, Crystal Spgs	4595.07	171	Mantee Baptist Church, Mantee	1925.00	294	Crenshaw Baptist Church, Crenshaw	1257.00			
48	Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Holly Springs	4567.72	172	Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo	1917.00	295	First Baptist Church, Purvis	1253.00			
49	Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Newton	4538.27	173	Emmanuel Baptist Church, Greenville	1909.60	296	First Baptist Church, Senatobia	1250.00			
50	Meadville Baptist Church, Meadville	4463.00	174	Friendship Baptist Church, Mc Comb	1898.24	297	Evergreen Baptist Church, Louisville	1250.00			
51	First Baptist Church, Columbus	4344.52	175	First Baptist Church, Magee	1897.50	298	Gooden Lake Baptist Church, Belzoni	1242.80			
52	First Baptist Church, Coldwater	4297.00	176	Cairo Baptist Church, Ecru	1891.37	299	Four Mile Creek Baptist Church, Escatawpa	1235.92			
53	Bethsaida Baptist Church, French Camp	4252.51	177	Foxworth Baptist Church, Foxworth	1855.59	300	First Baptist Church, Mathiston	1234.83			
54	Gaston Baptist Church, Booneville	4221.82	178	Calvary Baptist Church, West Point	1850.00	301	Immanuel Baptist Church, Greenwood	1218.00			
55	First Baptist Church, Starkville	4220.77	179	Madden Baptist Church, Madden	1845.74	302	Oak Grove Baptist Church, Bentonla	1210.00			
56	Wildwood Baptist Church, Clinton	4212.35	180	Phalti Baptist Church, Prentiss	1838.06	303	Arkabutla Baptist Church, Arkabutla	1209.92			
57	First Baptist Church, SardisSardis	4202.27	181	Roseland Park Baptist Church, Picayune	1835.00	304	Griffith Memorial Baptist Church, Jackson	1200.00			
58	First Baptist Church, Ripley	4195.31	182	Derma Baptist Church, Derma	1828.37	305	First Baptist Church, Steens	1200.00			
59	State Boulevard Baptist Church, Meridian	4176.53	183	Union Baptist Church, Beaumont	1822.00	306	Mount Zion Baptist Church, Florence	1200.00			
60	Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson	4115.00	184	Gum Grove Baptist Church, Brookhaven	1816.11	307	Iuka Baptist Church, Iuka	1200.00			
61	First Baptist Church, Belzoni	4080.65	185	Pearson Baptist Church, Pearl	1802.00	308	Tuscumbia Baptist Church, Booneville	1190.00			
62	First Baptist Church, Summit	4029.05	186	West Kemper Baptist Church, De Kalb	1800.00	309	East Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Quitman	1187.00			
63	Seminary Baptist Church, Seminary	3972.50	187	First Baptist Church, Calhoun City	1791.30	310	Scocba Baptist Church, Scocba	1180.09			
64	Sand Hill Baptist Church, Richton	3931.00	188	First Baptist Church, Natchez	1785.00	311	North Columbia Baptist Church, Columbia	1172.00			
65	Liberty Baptist Church, New Albany	3853.50	189	Shuqualak Baptist Church, Shuqualak	1762.20	312	First Baptist Church, Leakesville	1168.70			
66	Mount Zion Baptist Church, Columbus	3666.48	190	First Baptist Church, Saltillo	1741.93	313	Vardaman Baptist Church, De Kalb	1166.07			
67	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Brookhaven	3595.00	191	Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Eupora	1735.00	314	Hinkle Baptist Church, Rienzi	1157.56			
68	Fairview Baptist Church, Columbus	3576.16	192	Rock Hill Baptist Church, Brandon	1731.56	315	Calvary Baptist Church, Belmont	1153.28			
69	Fellowship Baptist Church, Meridian	3474.29	193	Gallman Baptist Church, Gallman	1731.22	316	Bethany Baptist Church, Meridian	1152.08			
70	North Greenwood Baptist Church, Greenwood	3436.55	194	Morgan Chapel Baptist Church, Sturgis	1729.24	317	Wynndale Baptist Church, Terry	1150.00			
71	First Baptist Church, Vicksburg	3395.05	195	Goodrum Memorial Baptist Church, Vicksburg	1729.06	318	Sallis Baptist Church, Sallis	1150.00			
72	First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst	3382.00	196	Mount Horeb Baptist Church, Meridian	1727.22	319	Hillcrest Baptist Church, New Albany	1150.00			
73	Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Mc Carley	3370.00	197	Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown	1720.90	320	Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison	1149.93			
74	Dry Creek Baptist Church, Mendenhall	3329.99	198	First Baptist Church, Tupelo	1710.00	321	Cooke Memorial Baptist Church, Houlika	1145.00			
75	First Baptist Church, Aberdeen	3325.00	199	Midway Baptist Church, Jackson	1686.00	322	Dublin Baptist Church, Carson	1138.51			
76	North Winona Baptist Church, Winona	3312.80	200	Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo	1685.00	323	Zion Hill Baptist Church, Guntown	1136.16			
77	Oak Grove Baptist Church, Mendenhall	3311.13	201	Hathorn Baptist Church, Columbia	1675.00	324	First Baptist Church, Long Beach	1134.00			
78	Crowder Baptist Church, Crowder	3221.05	202	Ebenezer Baptist Church, Liberty	1669.26	325	Eastend Baptist Church, Columbus	1134.00			
79	Hollandale Baptist Church, Hollandale	3180.00	203	First Baptist Church, Charleston	1655.82	326	Harmony Baptist Church, Pontotoc	1132.06			
80	Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Columbus	3112.70	204	First Baptist Church, Anguilla	1650.00	327	Salem Baptist Church, Raymond	1125.00			
81	Providence Baptist Church, Cleveland	3106.74	205	Fellowship Baptist Church, Ellisville	1646.93	328	Midway Baptist Church, Vardaman	1125.00			
82	First Baptist Church, Vancleave	3100.00	206	Calvary Baptist Church, Bogue Chitto	1644.39	329	New Hope Baptist Church, Sumrall	1108.00			
83	Holcomb Baptist Church, Holcomb	3087.24	207	Second Baptist Church, Indianola	1644.35	330	Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Tupelo	1100.00			
84	First Baptist Church, Winona	3048.78	208	First Baptist Church, Carthage	1640.25	331	Lone Oak Baptist Church, Glen	1100.00			
85	Ellistown Baptist ChurchBlue, Springs	3016.35	209	Fellowship Baptist Church, Ripley	1639.77	332	Knights Valley Baptist Church, Vossburg	1100.00			
86	Northwest Baptist Association, Hernando	3000.00	210	First Baptist Church, Pascagoula	1637.79	333	Edgeworth Baptist Church, Eupora	1100.00			
87	Macedonia Baptist Church, Myrtle	2978.30	211	Dorsey Baptist Church, Mantachie	1635.00	334	Pineville Baptist Church, Golden	1088.91			
88	Alexander Memorial Baptist Church, Hollandale	2923.59	212	First Baptist Church, Fulton	1634.50	335	Union Baptist Church, Picayune	1087.93			
89	Old Silver Creek Baptist Church, Silver Creek	2903.12	213	Mount Zion Baptist Church, Taylorsville	1633.50	336	Airport Baptist Church, Grenada	1081.66			
90	Springfield Baptist Church, Morton	2885.00	214	First Baptist Church, Laurel	1616.00	337	Northside Baptist Church, Lucedale	1075.99			
91	Calvary Baptist Church, Greenwood	2882.91	215	First Baptist Church, Ocean Springs	1615.27	338	Calvary Baptist Church, Belzoni	1062.00			
92	Central Baptist Church, Mc Comb	2880.14	216	Lexie Baptist Church, Tylertown	1612.66	339	Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Meridian	1059.42			
93	First Baptist Church, Union	2851.00	217	Crane Creek Baptist Church, Perkinston	1608.81	340	Oakvale Baptist Church, Oak Vale	1059.10			
94	Oak Hill Baptist Church, Pontotoc	2829.23	218	Second Baptist Church, Greenville	1604.00	341	Salem Baptist Church, Raleigh	1056.86			
95	Oak Forest Baptist Church, Jackson	2813.46	219	First Bellevue Baptist Church, Shelby	1600.00	342	Belden Baptist Church, Belden	1050.00			
96	First Baptist Church, Belmont	2807.00	220	Ebenezer Baptist Church, Bassfield	1599.35	343	New Hope Baptist Church, Meridian	1050.00			
97	First Baptist Church, Amory	2795.02	221	DeSoto Baptist Church, Shubuta	1588.00	344	New Home Baptist Church, Taylorsville	1048.68			
98	First Baptist Church, Isola	2781.69	222	Unity Baptist Church, Picayune	1587.00	345	Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville	1047.00			
99	First Baptist Church, Indianola	2762.38	223	First Baptist Church, Bruce	1581.00	346	First Baptist Church, Okolona	1042.85			
100	Shiloh Baptist Church, Big Creek	2728.75	224	Clarke Venable Baptist Church, Decatur	1575.35	347	Pine Grove Baptist Church, Quitman	1041.68			
101	Big Creek Baptist Church, Big Creek	2728.35	225	Central Baptist Church, Brookhaven	1574.00	348	Whitesand Baptist Church, Prentiss	1032.50			
102	Parkway Baptist Church, Kosciusko	2682.65	226	Success Baptist Church, Saucier	1558.81	349	County Line Baptist Church, Carthage	1031.00			
103	First Baptist Church, Eupora	2664.96	227	Trinity Baptist Church, Fulton	1554.00	350	Calvary Baptist Church, Silver Creek	1030.64			
104	Vaiden Baptist Church,Vaiden	2658.02	228	First Baptist Church, Leland	1550.00	351	Cumberland Baptist Church, Maben	1030.31			
105	Trinity First Baptist Church, Waynesboro	2647.64	229	Oak Dale Baptist Church, Pontotoc	1547.00	352	First Baptist Church, Canton	1030.31			
106	First Baptist Church, Clinton	2645.52	230	Harmony Baptist Church, Louisville	1537.25	353	Mount Horeb Baptist Church, Collins	1027.26			
107	Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Bogue Chitto	2637.90	231	Chesterville Baptist Church, Tupelo	1536.71	354	Fredonia Baptist Church, New Albany	1027.00			
108	Beulah Baptist Church, Bolton	2601.01	232	Friendship Baptist Church, Brookhaven	1526.00	355	Corinth Baptist Church, Heidelberg	1022.99			
109	Ruleville Baptist Church, Ruleville	2594.43	233	First Baptist Church, Runnelstown, Petal	1524.29	356	Leaf River Baptist Church, Forest	1022.60			
110	First Baptist Church, Newton	2578.18	234	Magee's Creek Baptist Church, Jayess	1521.33	357	Liberty Baptist Church, Toombsba	1016.76			
111	Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada	2575.45	235	Grays Creek Baptist Church, Hernando	150						

Many, many apologies! When we initially pulled the 1996 honor roll of churches, the computer left off some 30 or 40 churches that should have been included. Please note that this is a revised list to reflect the addition of these churches. We are sorry for the mis-information. This should be an accurate account of honor roll churches.

Are American men most pagan on earth?

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

You can find the missing PEACE



The Prince of Peace extends a wonderful invitation to you.

1. His love gives us peace.

This is his promise:

"Perfect love casts out fear."
(1 John 4:18) When we ask Christ into our lives, his love chases away fear.

2. His promise of eternal life gives us peace.

The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life." (Romans 6:23) God provides eternal life through the death and resurrection of his Son.

3. His promise to walk with us through life gives us peace.

Jesus said, "In me you may have peace. In this world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Jesus extends his promise of peace to us, but we must respond by accepting him as the missing piece in our lives.

You can make that commitment today by, (1) admitting you need God, (2) confessing your sins to him, and (3) by faith, receiving Christ as Lord.

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

OXNARD, Calif. (ABP) — American men "represent one of the most pagan subcultures on earth today," according to the Barna Research Group, a leading surveyor of religion in American life.

"There are 94 million adult males in America. Unfortunately, the church does not have much influence in the lives of most of them," notes the organization's president, George Barna, in the latest edition of its newsletter, "The Barna Report."

"The trend lines show that there has been little positive change recently within the male

population," Barna reported. "Since 1991, church attendance, Bible reading, Sunday School attendance, volunteering at church and donating to a church have all declined among men. The proportion of born-again men has remained unchanged."

Reversing those trends "would represent a major step forward for men, families, the church, and our society," Barna said.

Apart from their religious beliefs, many men apparently avoid church because it does not live up to their expectations, the newsletter reported.

Eighty-five percent of men who do not now attend church have been active in a church

before, the survey found.

"Their rejection of the church is a deliberate and substantive, rather than casual and uninformed, choice," Barna insisted.

"Why have so many men rejected Christ or his church at the same time they are searching for meaning, purpose, significance, influence, and inner peace?"

"The bottom line is that men tend to be bottom-line oriented. Most men contend that churches and Christian ministries do not provide them with sufficient value. ...Most men perceive the costs of church involvement too far outweigh the benefits," the report stated.

In a recent "Time" magazine cover story, Bill Gates, billionaire founder of the Microsoft, articulated that notion.

"Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient," Gates said. "There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning."

The Barna survey uncovered "five elements that most unchurched men look for" — and thus far are not finding in Christian churches:

- ◆ "Gaining a practical understanding of the Bible."
- ◆ "Getting to truly know God personally and meaningfully."
- ◆ "Developing lasting friendships with other men."
- ◆ "Gaining competent and comfortable religious instruction for their kids."
- ◆ "Having exposure to pragmatic solutions to the complex personal issues they struggle with every day."

Much is at stake in the church's struggle to meet those needs and reach American men with the gospel, Barna noted.

"If America is to experience a significant moral and spiritual revolution, it must integrally involve men," he said. "The need for such a transformation is undeniable," he said.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

Living on the edge with an alcoholic spouse is not my idea of the good life, and now he's encouraging our two sons to drink. I'm considering divorce for safety's sake, but can anything first be done to help him?

Anyone struggling with a loved one's alcoholism knows exactly how you feel, and it's a far cry from our cultural depiction of alcohol consumption. It's certainly not the "good life," as you observed — it's a living hell. "Living on the edge" is exactly what you have been doing. Is he going to be in a good mood today or angry? Will he be kind or abusive? There is the sense that one never knows what's coming next. It is frightening that he is encouraging your sons to drink. However, you must ask yourself if a divorce will help him, or help you. Explore other avenues before filing for divorce. Has he received treatment? If he is unwilling to receive treatment, are there ways to force him? Talk with a Christian alcohol treatment professional about your options in this regard. If you are in fear for your family's safety or your life is in danger, you do not have an obligation to stay in an abusive relationship that will destroy you or your family members. Separation is not the best alternative, but the time apart may get his attention. Also, consider calling on his friends to confront him about his alcohol abuse. If there are "old drinking buddies" who have fought to control their alcoholism, ask for their help. Remember: you do not have to remain in an abusive or dangerous relation-

ship. Seek Christian counseling for yourself and pray for wisdom and insight from the Heavenly Father.

My husband committed adultery two years ago, but we've gone on and our marriage is stronger. How can I get the "other woman" out of my mind?

Getting on with your life and your marriage is the best cure for the pain of adultery — if there has been true repentance on the part of the offender and a rebuilding of trust through accountability. Removing the other woman from your thoughts, however, is going to be more difficult. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to keep in mind that our sin-filled society gave your husband many other choices, but he chose to stay with you. Even though he made a big mistake, he apparently loves you and wants to correct that mistake by building a stronger marriage. Don't allow Satan to convince you that you should be comparing yourself to the other woman, instead of savoring the joy and security you now experience in your marriage. Share this concern with your husband to let him know of your need for his assurance. He may be uncomfortable, but his support is necessary to guide you back to the proper perspective. Time is an excellent healer. It has been "only" two years since the adultery, but as your love for each other continues to grow during this healing process, your concern for the other woman will lose its power over you and victory will take its place.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR AND BELIEFS OF AMERICAN MEN

RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR AMONG MEN

- 33% of American males claim to be born-again Christians
- 28% of adult males attend church services on a typical week
- 29% of American males read the Bible other than at church each week
- 40% say the Bible and religious beliefs are the primary influences on their moral thinking

NON-CHRISTIAN MEN'S BELIEFS

- 26% of non-Christian men say they believe "there are moral truths which are unchanging"
- 21% of non-Christian men believe in "hell as a place of physical torment"
- 58% of non-Christian men believe "a good person can earn their way into heaven."

CHRISTIAN MEN'S BELIEFS

- 47% of Christian men say they believe "there are moral truths which are unchanging"
- 56% of Christian men believe in "hell as a place of physical torment"
- 39% of Christian men believe "a good person can earn their way into heaven"
- 27% of Christian men say they believe "Jesus Christ committed sins"
- 28% of Christian men deny the physical resurrection of Jesus
- 48% of Christian men said Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil"

Source: "The Barna Report"



BSU GATHERING — More than 275 students from Mississippi college campuses gathered at Camp Garaywa for the 1997 Baptist Student Union African-American Student Retreat. The annual retreat, begun over 40 years ago, is geared for students from traditionally African-American colleges but is open to students of all races. (Photo by Carl M. White)